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Isolation

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Isolation

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

ISOLATION
By Hollis McCracken, MFA

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Virginia Commonwealth University, 2018.
Major Director: Heath Matysek-Snyder, Assistant Professor, Craft/Material Studies Department

My work investigates a lifelong passion for buildings, homes, and architecture. Buildings are more then shelters made of wood and screws; I personify them as if they were living breathing creatures. I'm particularly drawn to rundown and abandoned structures because I empathize with these sad looking buildings that were once majestic. This personal connection exists because I view them as versions of my former self, rough around the edges with a promising interior. Expanding beyond vacant and decaying buildings, I portray my experiences within fabricated architectural systems. I communicate with building materials and architecture through their many layers of physical and socially constructed histories. Drawing from my memories and feelings surrounding my brother's death and subsequent drug addiction, I've focused on the emotions of abandonment, isolation, absence, and loneliness.

The Beginning

"Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward." – Soren Kierkegaard

There are certain events in life that completely change you as a person. They become markers and measurements of time. They can occur in five seconds or can last years, but they alter the course of your life and your identity indefinitely. I've had several major life events but by far the biggest was the death of my only sibling, my older brother Jake. I believe that his death was the starting point to most things that transpired in my life.

> The movie *The Big Chill* begins with the death of a character you never meet, except for a few shots of his body being dressed for burial. As it turns out, this faceless individual is instrumental to the plot. His funeral brings his old circle of friends together, to relive the past and renegotiate the present in the wake of his absence. Each person must reconsider who he or she is, individually and within the group, because of his death. You never meet the man who has died, but you feel his absence, which is actually a presence of sorts. Director Lawrence Kasdan got something right here, something that resonates, about the aftermath of loss.
>
> The death of someone you love forces you to reconsider who you are. It forces you to belong to a club to which no one wants to be a member, and to which just about everyone, save those who die young, eventually belong.[1]

[1] DeVita-Raeburn, Elizabeth. *The Empty Room: Understanding Sibling Loss*. New York, NY: Scribner, 2007, 1.

My entire life has felt like that description of the Big Chill. Jake died in a car accident just a month shy of turning six when I was two and a half years old. I have carried his absence with me ever since. As a toddler I was of course unaware of the impact that loss was going to have on my identity, psyche, and life, I couldn't even comprehend the concept of death. The older I got the more I realized how losing him systematically affected the paths I took in life.

Despite the fact that my parents and I were all grieving Jake's death in our own way, I had a great childhood. I was happy and surrounded by good friends, but behind the joyful exterior was a lurking darkness. I couldn't stand to be alone and I was always afraid the people I loved would be taken from me. I often felt like I was different on the inside, but that nobody would understand me. I didn't even understand.

In middle school, on top of the normal teenage angst that was developing, that feeling of alienation continued to grow. I became a whirlpool of emotions. In any particular moment, I was sad, anxious, angry, and had fears that seemingly came from nowhere. My head was constantly full of racing thoughts and contradicting voices. It started to feel like I had a hole in me and I wouldn't be complete until it was filled. When I was fourteen I discovered that alcohol and drugs not only silenced the noise in my head but they also filled that void. They made me feel okay again.

> Later, when I tried to label and quantify what I'd lost when Ted died, I found myself sketching stick figures with limbs missing. It was an accurate analogy. Ted's death had left me feeling like an emotional and psychological amputee. I had adapted to his absence. I had functioned well enough, but it had been a struggle. I'd often felt as if I was compensating for something I was missing—as if I was perpetually in the process of maintaining, losing, or reclaiming my balance. I was a cripple without a crutch, flailing her hands in the air.

And I still felt phantom pain at the site of my lost limb. Except that the site of the cleaving—him from me, me from him—was not a neatly severed wound, obvious for all to see. It was internal. Amorphous. Dispersed within me. I couldn't point to the injury because the injury *was* me. It's another reason that many of us who have lost siblings start our stories with their deaths: It's our clearest view of the wound. I knew I was expected to "get over it" and get on with my life, unhindered. Be strong for my parents. Make it up to them, somehow. All of which was the equivalent of telling someone who's just lost his leg to run a road race. [2]

[2] DeVita-Raeburn, Elizabeth. *The Empty Room,* 98.

Turning Point

"Trapped. What I really wanted was to be happy, to be normal. But I had no idea how to make that happen." (DeVita-Raeburn)

I had just traded my last pack of cigarettes for three mystery pills and lay on my bottom bunk waiting to feel something other than my reality. I stayed there for over an hour hoping that the pills would kick in but they never did. I learned later that they don't prescribe narcotics to patients in rehab and I had likely just snorted an allergy pill or someone's depression medication. Staring up at the wooden slats of the bed above me, I contemplated how truly pathetic the last few years of my life had been.

Two months ago in complete exhaustion, I experienced a rare moment of clarity. I knew I needed to change, that I had a serious problem. I even wanted change, but I had no idea how. For several years I had been caught in a downward spiral of drugs, alcohol, lies, deceit, self-hatred, self-centeredness, and general trouble. Repeatedly I let my friends and family down, had close calls with the police, was kicked out of school, and had no goals or ambitions in life other then getting high. Even that became a drag. Altering my reality was all I thought about from morning until night. Every waking moment was devoted to getting money, to get the drugs, to get high, and to hide all this from anyone who still cared about me. The problem was that the drugs and alcohol weren't filling the void anymore. I was in a constant state of nothingness and I didn't know how to get out of it.

I desperately held on to this way of life even though I didn't want it anymore; I was too scared to learn what a life without drugs and alcohol would be like. Deep down I knew that I couldn't continue the way I was living. I wasn't living; I merely existed. The many brushes with death I had experienced didn't scare me, I was resigned to whatever the future might hold. My body was unhealthy and way too skinny, but eating seemed like a chore. I was too tired to keep fighting, too tired to keep up with the lies and schemes. I gave in and accepted help.

I never moved back home to Baltimore after rehab. When I graduated from the program I was eighteen and it was agreed that it would be too risky to return to my old routines. My parents had tricked me into rehab by flying me to Arizona for a visit but not buying a return ticket. A few weeks into the year, my mom sent a big box full of clothes and things I would need. Even though I was at the age when most kids move out of the house and head to college, it felt different for me. I hadn't planned my move, I hadn't said goodbye to friends, I wasn't headed to a dorm, and I hadn't packed up my room. I left Baltimore on a Thursday afternoon with a backpack for the weekend and never came back.

After rehab, I lived in Flagstaff, Arizona for a year and a half. My friends and I banded together to figure out life as new adults. I floundered for a bit, enrolling at a college and then failing out of that college. I started and quit several menial jobs in a row, searching for something better. Most importantly, I learned how to take care of myself and to live life sober. When I gained enough confidence and stability, I moved to San Francisco and started college again. Upon graduating, I landed back in Arizona and lived there for five more years before deciding to apply to graduate schools. Those years between leaving home and moving to Richmond, Virginia were incredibly formative, I grew up and changed as a person. I no longer resembled a drug addict haunted by her brother's death, but I was definitely shaped by it.

When I relocated to Richmond for graduate school, I felt closer to my past. This was mostly psychological as I was living three hours away from where I grew up. There was a bigger chance of running into people I knew from back in the day or of visiting a place I had already been. The city of Richmond was familiar and it looked more like Baltimore then any place I had lived previously. Like Baltimore, Richmond was full of bricks, cobblestones, row houses, and one hundred year old buildings. For the first time in years I was again living in a multi storied house, with hard wood floors, high ceilings, trim around windows and doorways, and surrounded by familiar trees and vegetation. This nostalgia for architecture and environments was fascinating to me, and it infiltrated my studio work during my first year.

Architecture

"Any space that belongs to an individual speaks to us instantly and loudly. When we enter or even glance into it, we will have an instinctive reaction, just as we do when we first meet someone." (Alison Lurie)

As an investment and a way to help me through grad school, my parents bought a house in Oregon Hill. I had proposed this idea to my Dad as a business plan; they buy the fixer upper, I put in the sweat equity, they make money when it sells, and I not only have a place to live, but get experience in home renovation. I had always wanted to try my hand in renovating but didn't have the money to get started. They found a neglected, brick row house that was built in 1900. It was still a great home but it had been a rental for the last decade and my new neighbors told us horror stories about the character of its former tenants.

My wife and I arrived in Richmond in June, knowing that we would need to spend some time getting the house in better condition before school started. We spent the summer, scraping, patching, painting, repairing, plumbing, rebuilding, mending, and landscaping. We collected a weird pile of materials that past owners hadn't thrown away: extra bathroom tiles, a slab of our kitchen counter, a block of granite, bricks, floorboards, and old porch columns. In the renovation process, I tore out porch siding and fencing, and I had extra lengths of baseboards, trim, and drywall that I had purchased. When put together, this interesting mix of old and new materials told the story of our house.

While walking my dog, I spent a lot of time looking at the other houses in my neighborhood, comparing notes and learning what ours should look like. Over time, I started to notice how each house had an individual character. Even though they were all two-story sixteen-foot wide row houses, with four windows, and a porch in the front, they each had their own voice. They told stories about their owners through their materials; some were built with brick and some clad in wood, some windows had shutters while others had blinds or decorative trim, and some of the porches were made of a concrete slab while others had beautiful ornate wooden detailing.

After spending a couple of months in the studio playing with the materials from our home and ideas based around my neighborhood, it finally became obvious to me that I had a deep-rooted interest in architecture. I thought that after twelve years on the other side of the country, these buildings were catching my eye because of their different styles and details. While that may have been a part of it, I think my upbringing contributed to the rest. I grew up in a family full of building minded people. My grandfather taught building construction at Virginia Tech, my aunt, uncle, and both godparents are architects, and my father worked for a contracting company that specialized in historic preservation. I have always paid attention to architecture and the built environment surrounding me but I never fully realized this.

When I was really young I would get excited when my dad needed to make weekend checks on job sites. He would let me ride along, digging through his trunk until he found an extra hard hat. It never fit me right but I relished any opportunity to wear it. I would scurry behind him as he talked to the foreman, taking in the activity around me. The most exciting days were those when we would climb scaffolding to look at something. I would scramble through the metal puzzle, putting my years of monkey bars and tree climbing to the test.

Some weeknights he would have blueprints spread across our dining room table, flipping the pages as he made little notes and marks. I would stare at the blue lines that made up floor plans and elevations, trying to envision it the way he did. He would teach me how to decipher the code of symbols; an arc shows the swing of a door, double lines within the wall delineate windows, etc. When I played with my Legos he showed me how to stagger the bricks, overlapping them to make stronger walls. On family vacations we would go to the usual tourist spots, museums, and restaurants, but we would also go to buildings that interested him architecturally. After my first semester, it became clear to me that I wanted to use my time in graduate school to dive into this passion for architecture.

Embodiment

"A building is an inanimate object, but it is not an inarticulate one." (Alison Lurie)

My early work in the studio questioned how our constructed environments and the objects that surround us, inform, mold, and identify each of us. I was analyzing the judgments I made about people based on the type of house they kept and how they decorated. I looked to other artists that worked with the house as a subject and drew great inspiration from Gordon Matta Clark, Theaster Gates, Rachel Whiteread, and Do Ho Suh in particular. After some experimentation, I began to embrace the investigation of materials themselves. I was using my own house as the subject, inspired by the one hundred and eighteen years of life and history that had moved through its walls. Without any records of prior homeownership, I relied on details like the wallpaper that we unearthed to give me clues about who might have lived here. We knew that our house at some point had plumbing installed, heating and air conditioning put in, and an addition added to the back. Our house grew as its owner's needs grew; it got make over's and face-lifts as the styles changed.

Knowing that I wanted to work with materials that were imbued with history, but running out of resources from my home, I started going to local architectural salvage stores. Once inside the aisles of old molding, floor boards, banisters, tiles, windows, and hardware, it completely

reaffirmed my interest in old materials. Being able to pick up a doorknob and see the natural patina that was formed from a century of hands touching it was amazing. I wanted to find a way to showcase that kind of history in building materials. Thinking about the amount of materials that it takes to construct a home, and how more often then not we take them for granted, I began making eight-inch cubes out of these construction materials. By isolating them into single building blocks I gave them space to exist individually. Needing a more economical way to gather these materials, and seeking more variety, I eventually started to search construction dumpsters.

Figure One: *Building Blocks*

While driving through Richmond looking for dumpsters, I discovered a surplus in the Church Hill neighborhood. There appeared to be demolition and renovation happening on almost every block. I was in heaven. I would fill my car to the brim with materials and transport them back to my studio to make cubes from them. As I circled this neighborhood looking for more construction, I couldn't help but notice how many other houses were boarded up, in disrepair, and just idly sitting there without activity. This neighborhood had been undergoing transformation for several decades and while some houses had been rebuilt to their former glory and were standing proud with fresh paint, others looked sad and neglected.

My eyes would linger on those houses in disrepair and I started to feel emotionally connected to them. I realized that I personified those buildings and viewed them as beings, feeling empathy for them because they were overlooked. This sadness was overwhelming and I knew that there could still be beauty in what must have once been really majestic homes.

> The tradition of equating furniture and buildings with living beings can be traced back to the Roman author Vitruvius, who paired each of the three principal classical orders with a human or divine archetype from Greek mythology. The Doric column, with its plain capital and squat profile, had its equivalent in the muscular, martial hero Hercules, the Ionic column, with its decorated scrolls and base, corresponded with stolid, middle-aged goddess Hera; and the Corinthian column, the most intricately embellished of the three and the one with the tallest, slenderest profile, found its model in the beautiful adolescent deity Aphrodite.[3]

[3] Botton, Alain De. *The Architecture of Happiness*. London: Penguin Books, 2014. 86.

I came to realize that I was projecting my own life experiences onto these homes. During my drug addiction, when I had started to really screw things up, I pushed most people away and burned a lot of bridges. There were a few that stood by me and saw my potential even when I couldn't. They knew that I would find my way out of the fog despite how ugly things had gotten. I'm so grateful for those people that never gave up on me, and in some weird karmic way, I felt I could repay that loyalty to these homes.

I channeled those thoughts into the creation of *Inside Out.* On the surface, people and buildings can look run down, but that doesn't mean there isn't any value left. I too was often judged by my appearance or behavior and cast aside as a "lost cause". *Inside Out* is an eight-foot tall by five-foot wide section of an exterior house wall. It appears to be cut directly from an existing building but in reality is pieced together from reclaimed materials. The outside of the wall is made from weathered and deteriorating wooden siding that has many layers of peeling paint. It is in obvious need of repair and represents the similar part of my former self. The window is boarded up with plywood, affirming that this is an uninhabitable place. The other side of the freestanding wall represents my authentic self that gets overlooked because it is hidden inside of a dilapidated exterior. This interior is freshly dry walled and painted with a cheerful and bright yellow. The window is surrounded by white trim and fixed in the open position to contrast the plywood covering on its other side.

Figure Two: *Inside Out*

Figure Three: *Inside Out* (side detail)

Figure Four: *Inside Out (*side detail)

This work led into my *Vacancy* series, which became an investigation more specific to the actual neighborhood of Church Hill. In an effort to honor the enormous number of vacant buildings, I revisited the cubes I had been making. Seeing their potential as building blocks, I arranged them in various structures within the critique rooms. During this process I realized that it was the evolution of these materials that interested me the most. They were originally created and sold to build a house; then became damaged and aged, torn out of the home, tossed in the trash, and eventually rebuilt into cubes. Materials that were once deemed unworthy and sent to the dump were now getting a second chance in the spotlight.

To push this idea further, I packed my car full of these cubes and took them back to Church Hill. Driving to one abandoned house after another, I used the cubes to mend various aspects of their disrepair. Where rotting porch posts caused sagging roofs, I stacked columns of the cubes to support it. Where the stairs had been torn out, I recreated the steps to front doors. Each house needed a unique aspect repaired and I documented all of these interventions with photographs. While I enjoyed this process of temporarily healing these abandoned homes, the photographs weren't doing the cubes justice. No matter how large I blew the images up, the individuality and details of the cubes were still obscured.

Curious about the vacancies, I did some research and found a Richmond City website that requires all buildings that have been empty for at least twelve months to register their address and ownership. After mapping out all of the addresses, I located an astounding one hundred and twenty six vacant buildings in the Church Hill area. I continued building the cubes until there was exactly one hundred and twenty six, one cube for each registered vacant building. In *Vacancy*, the cubes were placed on the floor so that each one constituted a city block with a vacant home. The cubes were numbered to correspond with the list of addresses I had compiled.

Figure Five: *Vacancy Mending #2*

Figure Six: *Vacancy Mending #3*

Figure Seven: *Vacancy*

Precariousness

During my second year I began to focus my studio practice inward. I continued to borrow language from the architecture around me but re-configured it to create fragmented self-portraits of my past. I was reflecting on a deeper level about the death of my brother, my subsequent drug addiction, and the emotions that surrounded them. This was prompted by a desire to push myself out of my comfort zone but also by the unexpected deaths of two friends.

Katie was a young woman who I had mentored in Tucson. She had struggled to maintain sobriety over the years but had managed to stay clean for over twelve months after the birth of her son. During a moment of weakness she slipped up and got high with her boyfriend. As a former heroin addict she thought she knew her tolerance but unfortunately she miscalculated. The second friend was David, he and I had met in rehab when we were seventeen. He was a really creative person that had an infectious zest for life. On top of dealing with addiction he also struggled with mental disorders. That struggle became too much for him and he died at the age of thirty.

Unfortunately these are just two stories, of many, about the people I have lost. Despite knowing the low percentage success rates of drug addicts staying sober, it is still shocking to learn when someone I care about has succumbed to those statistics. It not only brings up the emotions surrounding my brother's death and every loss after him, but it reminds me of the

fragility of my own life. It's been thirteen years since I've had a sip of alcohol or ingested any drug but that doesn't mean I'm immune to a lapse in judgment. I could easily become Katie or David, I am just as vulnerable as they were.

In *Precarious Weight* and *Scaffolding #1,* I visually pushed the idea of heavy weight being supported by a delicate foundation. The heavy weights in these works were made from bricks and cinder blocks but represented the looming weight of addiction and mental disorders. I was drawn to the scaffolding systems seen in wooden roller coast tracks, train tresses, and bridges, because they reinforced the idea that there is strength in numbers. By itself, any piece of the scaffolding would snap under the weight, but in quantity, those skinny supports became incredibly strong. I wasn't able to fight my addiction by myself; it took the strength of everyone around me to recover, just as scaffolding needs every cross support and connection.

I continued to work with this scaffolding in *You can see me/I can't see you,* diving deeper into the psychological and emotional affects of addiction and loss. I built four walls on top of the scaffolding structure to form a ten-foot by ten-foot room that was accessible through an open doorway in the back. The walls had various sized windows framed into them that were covered in sheets of Mylar, a mirrored plastic film. When the work was lit with a singular interior light source, the Mylar allowed viewers on the exterior to see inside, but the viewers on the interior could only see their own reflection. This spoke to the mental feelings of isolation from addiction. As an addict I was unable to see the people that surrounded me. All I was aware of was what my addiction told me I needed.

Figure Eight: *Scaffolding #1*

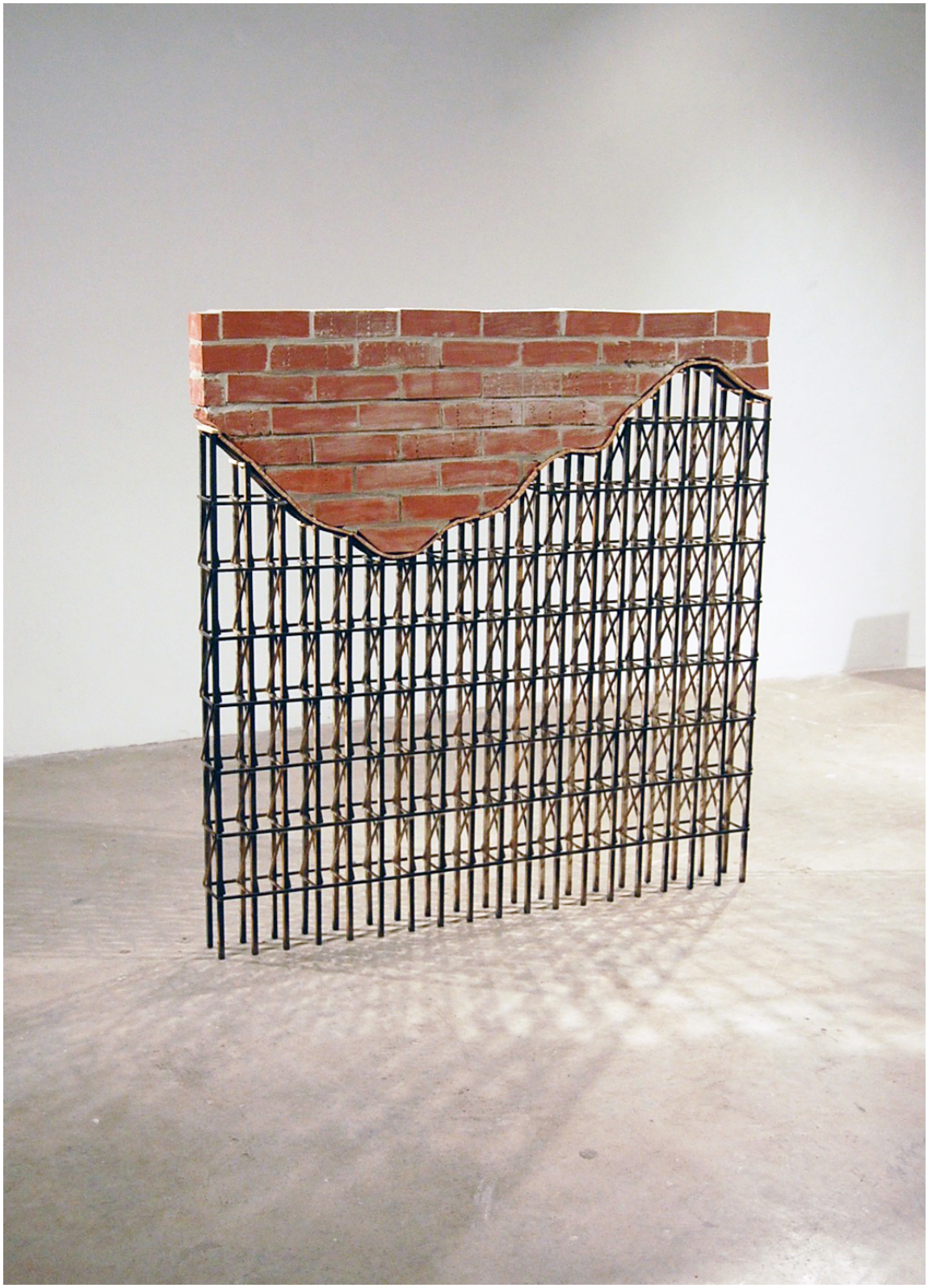

Figure Nine: *Precarious Weight*

Figure Ten: *You See Me/I Can't See You*

Figure Eleven: *You See Me/I Can't See You* (interior view)

Figure Twelve: *You See Me/I Can't See You (*Exterior detail)

Isolation

"Any object of design will give off an impression of the psychological and moral attitudes it supports." (Alain De Botton)

In essence, what works of design and architecture talk to us about is the kind of life that would most appropriately unfold within and around them. They tell us of certain moods that they seek to encourage and sustain in their inhabitants. While keeping us warm and helping us in mechanical ways, they simultaneously hold out an invitation for us to be specific sorts of people. They speak of visions of happiness.

To describe a building as beautiful therefore suggests more than a mere aesthetic fondness; it implies an attraction to the particular way of life this structure is promoting through its roof, door handles, window frames, staircase and furnishings. A feeling of beauty is a sign that we have come upon a material articulation of certain ideas of a good life. Similarly, buildings will strike us as offensive not because they violate a private and mysterious visual preference but because they conflict with our understanding of the rightful sense of existence – which helps to explain the seriousness and viciousness with which disputes about fitting architecture tend to unfold.

We seem divided between an urge to override our senses and numb ourselves to our settings and a contradictory impulse to acknowledge the extent to which our identities are indelibly connected to, and will shift along with, our locations. An ugly room can coagulate any loose suspicions as to the incompleteness of life, while a sun-lit one set with honey colored limestone tiles can lend support to whatever is most hopeful within us. [4]

[4] Botton, Alain De. *The Architecture of Happiness*. 12.

Being stuck in my drug addiction was the most isolating, lonely, experience of my life. While I was using, I was so self centered and absorbed with getting high that I couldn't see the world around me. Every minute of my day and thought in my head was devoted to something related to getting high. Once in a while the haze would clear enough that I could see my life at its face value, truly seeing how cyclical it all was. I felt completely helpless, and couldn't seem to reach out to the people in my life. I look back on those times and see a shell of my full self. I had no life inside me; I was an empty body going through the motions.

After reflecting on how I personify houses and see myself in them, I was curious about what the opposite would look like. For my thesis *Isolation,* I designed a structure that represents my body and state of mind during my drug addiction. Spiraling inwards, the building is an octagonal shape that is made of 1" x 2" framed walls. The walls are only covered with lath, an older building technique used to construct plaster walls. I intentionally left the walls bare to emphasize the skeletal quality of the structure, and to show the 'bones of the house'. Because this work is a representation of my unhealthy mind and body, I used thinner wood and smaller dimensions then typically used in construction. The lath technique also allowed a level of transparency within the walls, permitting sight through the quarter inch gap between the strips of wood. During my addiction I thought that I had built strong emotional barriers but really I was as vulnerable and transparent as this structure.

The windows framed within the walls allow viewers to see into the structure uninhibited, while an opening at one end invites the curious to walk inside. As the audience winds deeper into the work, the passageway becomes narrower and the headings lower. The sense of claustrophobia is additionally enhanced by a mirror finish on the inside of the windows, preventing any sight out. Once the viewer has made it to the center of the spiral structure, they

are enclosed in a tiny area and completely surrounded by reflective surfaces. The viewer is then confronted with their image relentlessly and cannot see anything but themselves and the structure around them. The entire building rests on top of skinny wooden scaffolding and tresses, amplifying its fragility.

Two lighthouses in particular, the Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland [5], and the Middle Bay Lighthouse on the Mobile Bay in Alabama [6] inspired the shape. These historic hexagonal lighthouses were built on iron undergirding and reside over the water rather then on a bluff. I chose the image of a lighthouse because I related to the loneliness and isolation required by its keeper and to the idea of the light as a beacon. Lighthouse keepers survived the intense isolation so that they could keep the light burning. This allowed boats and ships to navigate dangerous waters and follow the beacon to safety.

Isolation exists in a dark room and is illuminated by one bulb housed on top of the structure. The fixture bathes the work and emits light through its cracks, creating a warm environment. As you wind through the work the light continues to intensify, reaching its brightness at the nucleus. The center room of *Isolation* is the smallest space that is the least accessible. After enduring the disorienting spiraling passageway, one has to duck to get inside this space, which is not much wider than shoulder width. The uncomfortable restriction is balanced by the warmth and privacy it offers. The light acts as a lighthouse beacon, drawing you into the safety of the center of the spiral. I often tried to battle my way out of my addiction but I

[5] "Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse History." Reflectors by Thomas Tag | US Lighthouse Society. Accessed May 10, 2018. http://uslhs.org/about/thomas-point-shoal-lighthouse/history.

[6] Middle Bay Lighthouse. Accessed May 10, 2018. http://ahc.alabama.gov/properties/middlebay/middlebay.aspx.

always gave up easily. It was much more comfortable to sit idly in familiar isolation then it was to claw my way through the suffocating grips of addiction. *Isolation* represents the contradictions of drug addiction; feeling trapped and alone while simultaneously being lulled by its comfort and repetition.

Figure Thirteen: *Isolation*

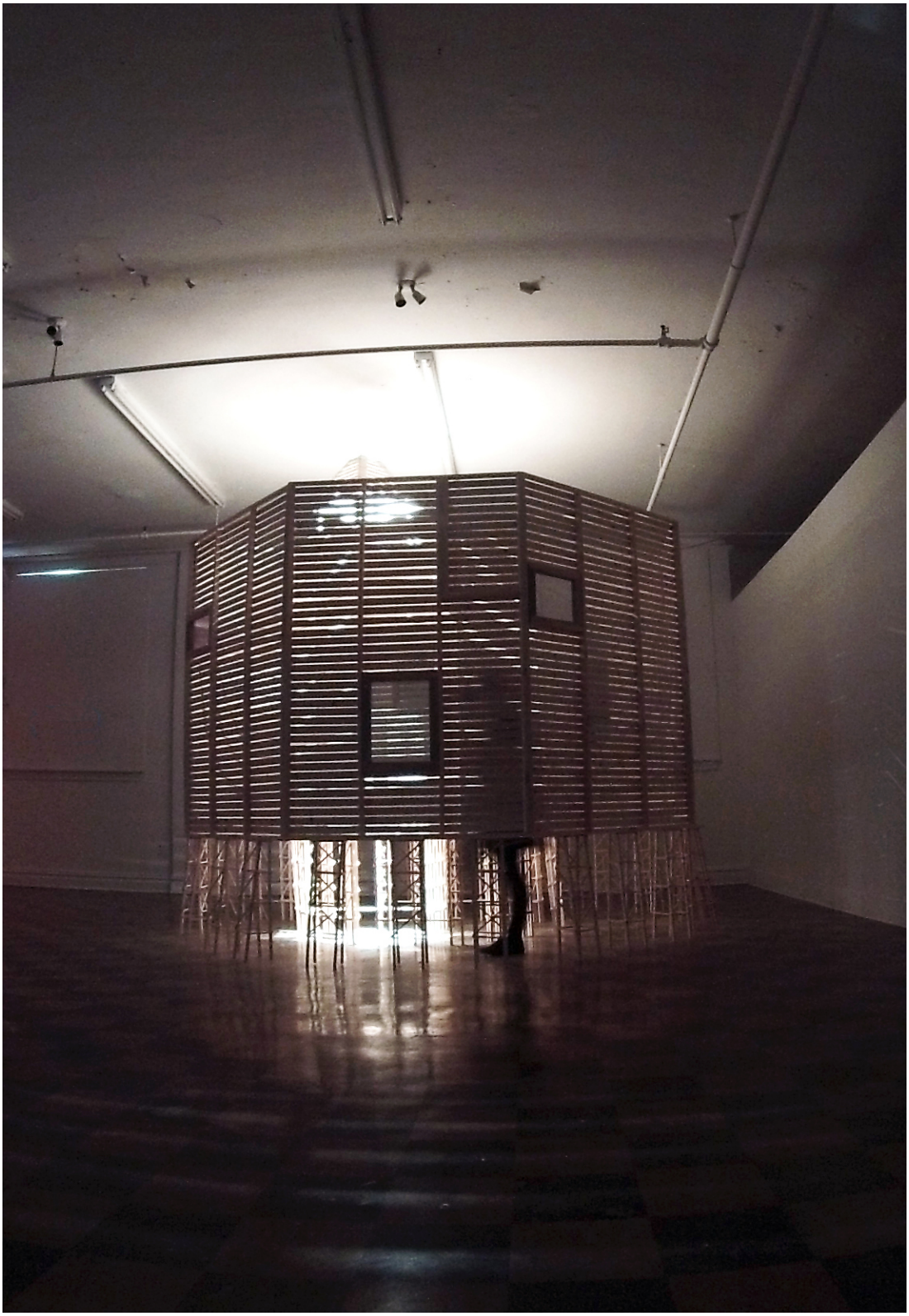

Figure Fourteen: *Isolation*

Figure Fifteen: *Isolation (*interior detail)

Figure Sixteen: *Isolation (*exterior detail)

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Vita

Education

2018	Virginia Commonwealth University, Master of Fine Art.
2011	Academy of Art University, Bachelor of Fine Art.

Exhibitions

2019	(Upcoming) King Street Gallery, Tacoma Park, MD
2018	*MFA Thesis Show,* Anderson Gallery, Richmond, VA
	Emerging Artists, Target Gallery, Alexandria, VA
2017	*Nine Days,* Hawthorn Gallery, Richmond, VA
	Critical, Hohman Design, Richmond, VA
2016	*Toast,* The Depot, Richmond, VA
2015	*Enlightenment,* Krikawa Gallery, Tucson, AZ
	Time Travelers Figurative Show, Toscana Studio and Gallery, Tucson, AZ
2011	*Untitled,* Joel D Valdez Main Library, Tucson, AZ
	Neon and Light Show, Deco, Tucson, AZ
2010	*Emerging Sculptors,* 688 Sutter Street Gallery, San Francisco, CA
	Academy of Art University Spring Show, San Francisco, CA
2009	*Academy of Art University Spring Show,* San Francisco, CA
	California Conference for the Advancement of Ceramics, Academy of Art University Gallery, Davis, CA

Experience

2017	Adjunct Faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University, School of the Arts, Craft/Material Studies Department, Richmond, VA
2012-2016	Sculpture Laboratory Technician at Pima Community College, Tucson, AZ
2011-2012	Instructor at Arts for All Inc, Tucson, AZ

Awards

2016/2018	Graduate Teaching Assistantship, Virginia Commonwealth University, School of the Arts, Craft/Material Studies Department, Richmond, VA